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May 28, 2013

Office of Environmental Information  
(Mail Code: 28221T)  
Docket #EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0189  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment

Nunamta Aulukestai wants to express our appreciation to the Environmental Protection Agency for gathering the science of the Bristol Bay fishery and the cultural knowledge from the indigenous people who rely on this sustainable resource.

The conclusion in the Watershed Assessment is not a surprise to the people of Bristol Bay. Large scale extractive industries will impact the people of Bristol Bay who rely so heavily on the returning salmon each year.

For that reason, the board of directors of Nunamta Aulukestai adopted the attached resolution to express our support for the assessment and call upon the Environmental Protection Agency to start the process under the Clean Water Act to prohibit or restrict large scale extractive industries from putting their waste into the pristine waters, streams, rivers and wetlands in the Nushagak and Kvichak Watershed.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Williams

Enc.

RESOLUTION 2013-04

**A resolution supporting the revised Environmental Protection Agency Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment and supporting the EPA to immediately take further actions to protect Bristol Bay.**


- WHEREAS, Nunamta Aulukestai non-profit corporation in Alaska and serves members from village corporations and tribal governments in Southwest Alaska; and
- WHEREAS, Nunamta Aulukestai advocates for approximately 6,124 tribal members and 4,775 shareholders from the Bristol Bay region who rely on the land, fish, wildlife, cultural resources and the waters of the region for subsistence; and
- WHEREAS, Nunamta Aulukestai, acting as the duly elected governing body pursuant to the Constitution of Alaska, has the authority to establish relationships and enter into contracts; and
- WHEREAS, other village corporations, tribes, sportsmen, and commercial fishermen have requested that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) come in and protect Bristol Bay waters from large scale mining development; and
- WHEREAS, in response to this request, EPA initiated the collection of science about the Bristol Bay Fishery; and
- WHEREAS, the first draft of the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment was release in May, 2012 with EPA holding public hearings around Bristol Bay and solicited comments and
- WHEREAS, the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment was further reviewed by a panel of scientists as part of the Peer Review Process; and
- WHEREAS, EPA responded to the Peer Reviewed Report and revised the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment to include science data as part of a comprehensive risk assessment that underscores that large scale mining, would “at a minimum cause the loss of spawning and rearing habitat for multiple salmonids” (ES-i) and even with no incidents of catastrophic failure, large scale mining would – block streams with roads and development, reduce water flow in the region, directly eliminate up to 4800 acres of wetlands, and directly eliminate up to 90 miles of streams, and dewater an additional 33 miles of stream that are important habitat for multiple fish and wildlife species; and
- WHEREAS, EPA once again is soliciting comments on the revised draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment; and
- WHEREAS, EPA has the authority under section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to prohibit the specification (including the withdrawal of specification) of any defined area as a disposal site and is authorized to deny or restrict the use of any defined area for

specification (including the withdrawal of specification) as a disposal site, whenever it determines, after notice and opportunity for public hearings, that the discharge of such materials into such area will have an unacceptable adverse effect on municipal water supplies, shellfish beds and fishery areas (including spawning and breeding areas), wildlife, or recreational areas.


**NOW THEREFORE MAY IT BE RESOLVED** that Nunamta Aulukestai supports the findings of the revised EPA Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, and requests EPA finalize the revised Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment in 2013; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Nunamta Aulukestai requests EPA move immediately into the process under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to prohibit large scale mining activities in the Bristol Bay region that will have an unacceptable adverse impact in Bristol Bay's fisheries and wildlife as shown in the revised Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment.

Adopted this 20 day of May, 2013.

  
(NAME), Chairman

Attest:

  
(NAME), Secretary